

# You have the power to Donate Life.

RTI Donor Services is a national network of agencies providing families with the opportunity to donate tissues for recipients throughout the world. We work with local communities to provide donation education and support.

**We thank you for considering the gift of donation.**

If you would like more information, please contact us.

[www.rtidonorservices.org](http://www.rtidonorservices.org)

**RTI Donor Services**  
*Weaving Lives Together™*

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Cameron, heart valve recipient



Karri, bone recipient

Be  
a tissue  
donor.



You have the power to change someone's world by being a tissue donor.  
It's about living. It's about Life.

## Tissue Donation and Transplantation

Tissue transplantation is one of the most remarkable success stories in the history of medicine. More than one million lifesaving and life-enhancing tissue transplants are performed each year, offering patients a new chance at healthy, productive and normal lives. You are likely to have a neighbor, friend or even a family member who has received a tissue transplant. This is often a necessary part of medical treatment for a multitude of diseases and injuries, from bone fracture or ligament repair to heart surgery.

Although there is a critical shortage of some tissue for transplant, many Americans have never thought about being a tissue donor. Like organ donation, it's an opportunity to share your life with others.



Bonnie, bone recipient

When Bonnie fell on an icy playground at the school where she was a Teacher-Librarian, her life as a wife, mother, educator and volunteer came to an abrupt stop! With that one slip on the ice, her femur smashed and her leg was broken in multiple places. She was in a wheelchair for months; but following a bone transplant and months of physical therapy, her dream to walk again came true. She regained her mobility and once again is enjoying an active life.

## One tissue donor can enhance the lives of more than 50 people.

**Bone** is used to restore mobility in people who would otherwise be incapacitated or disabled, to rebuild a jaw affected by cancer or severe gum disease and to reconstruct limbs damaged by trauma or disease.

**Corneas** are used to restore sight to people who have been injured by disease, infection or trauma.

**Heart valves** can be lifesaving to children born with absent or damaged heart valves and to adults with life-threatening cardiac defects and damage.

**Ligaments and tendons** are used to rebuild joints and restore strength, mobility and independence for patients injured in sporting activities, by trauma, or from arthritis or other diseases.

**Skin grafts** help burn patients heal and often mean the difference between life and death. Skin grafts protect against infection and pain while the patient's own skin is healing. Many types of surgeries, such as open heart and urological surgeries, abdominal wall repair and post-mastectomy breast reconstruction also utilize skin grafts.

**Veins and arteries** are used in heart bypass surgery to re-establish blood circulation in patients with coronary artery disease. For those who have lost circulation in their legs, donated veins can help to avoid leg amputation.

Tissue donation is about Life.  
Many are in need.  
You have the power to save lives  
and restore health.



# Frequently Asked Questions about Tissue Donation

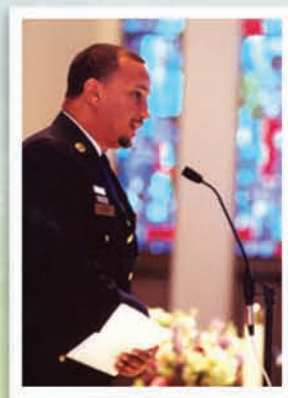
## Who can be a donor?

Tissue donation is an option for most individuals, regardless of age, and is often possible even when organ donation is not. Your commitment to donate will not interfere with your medical care. At the time of death, trained medical staff will determine the medical suitability of the donor.

A history of cancer, diabetes, broken bones or some other illnesses or injuries does not necessarily prohibit tissue donation. Guidelines are followed to ensure that the donor is free of any infectious disease that might, in turn, harm a tissue recipient. Until all medical tests and screenings are complete, the tissue is not released for transplant.

## How is donation accomplished?

Tissue donation becomes an option only after all lifesaving efforts have been made and the donor has died. After consent has been received, the donated tissue is recovered by skilled medical professionals in a surgical setting. The donor's body is treated with the utmost care and respect. Unlike organs, which must be transplanted within hours of donation, most tissue is preserved for later use. Tissue is stored in facilities called "tissue banks" and supplied to physicians when needed for their patients.



Joe, skin graft recipient

Burned over 65% of his body in a blaze that killed two of his fellow firefighters, Joe was given a 5% chance of survival. Donor skin tissue helped save his life and bring him back to his family.

## Is all donated tissue used for transplantation?

When donated tissue cannot be used for transplantation, it may be used for approved medical education and research such as evaluating new disease treatments, improving transplantation and surgical techniques, and developing new medications. Using tissue for these purposes may be done only if the appropriate consent is given.

For Janine, an avid basketball and volleyball player, her world was turned upside down when a collision on the basketball court tore her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). Only a knee operation—and the gift of donated tissue to replace her ligament—would restore her mobility. Thanks to a generous tissue donor, Janine has returned to the court and is a happy and active teenager again.



Janine, ligament recipient, ACL repair

## Facts about Tissue Donation

**FACT:** All major religions support organ, eye and tissue donation as an unselfish act of charity.

**FACT:** Regardless of a donor's vision or existence of cataracts and other conditions, corneas have the potential to restore sight to a person with corneal blindness.

**FACT:** Tissue donation occurs within 12-24 hours of death and should not delay or change funeral arrangements. An open casket funeral is possible.

**FACT:** There is no cost to the donor's family or estate for donation. The donor family pays only for medical expenses before death and standard costs associated with funeral arrangements.

**FACT:** In the United States, it is illegal to buy or sell organs or tissue for transplantation.

**FACT:** To preserve anonymity, the identities of the donor and the recipients are confidential. Tissue-bank personnel may provide donor families with general information about how donated tissue was used.

**FACT:** Tissue is distributed based on patient need, availability and medical criteria. Tissue recipients range from newborns to senior citizens.

Visit [www.donatelife.net](http://www.donatelife.net) for more information.



The American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) is a non-profit, educational and scientific organization founded in 1976 to enhance and save lives by promoting and facilitating the safety, quality and availability of donated human tissue. The AATB writes tissue-banking standards, accredits tissue banks, and certifies tissue-bank personnel to ensure that tissue-banking activities are performed in the highest professional manner.



Debbi, skin graft recipient

During post-mastectomy reconstruction, Debbi received skin grafts as part of her treatment. "My tissue donor gave me the gift of feeling whole again."

## Making the decision to donate

The decision to donate is a personal one. Once you decide to donate life by becoming a tissue donor, designate your decision in your state's donor registry or on your driver's license at your Motor Vehicle Department. It is always important to let your family know of your wishes since they will be consulted during the donation process.

For specific instructions for your state, go to [www.donatelife.net](http://www.donatelife.net).

Complete and give to your next of kin.



## FAMILY NOTIFICATION CARD

Dear Family,

I want you to know about my decision to become an organ, eye and tissue donor. Upon my death, if I am a candidate for donation, I ask that you honor my wishes. It is important to me that others are given the opportunity to live full and productive lives.

**I wish to donate the following:**

- any needed organs and tissue
- only the following organs and tissue:

Thank you for honoring my commitment to donate Life through organ, eye and tissue donation.

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_